

Krause Music Store  
(now the Coleman Funeral Home)  
4611 North Lincoln Avenue  
Chicago  
Cook County  
Illinois

HABS No. ILL-1073

HABS  
ILL,  
16-CHIG,  
72-

PHOTOGRAPH  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Washington Planning and Service Center  
1730 North Lynn Street  
Arlington, Virginia

## HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS No. ILL-1073

KRAUSE MUSIC STORE  
(now the Coleman Funeral Home)

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ILL,  
16-CHIG,  
72-

Location: 4611 North Lincoln Avenue; Chicago, Cook County,  
Illinois.

Present Owner  
and Occupant: James M. Coleman, Mortuary.

Present Use: Funeral Home.

Statement of  
Significance: The facade of this single-bay structure was Louis  
Sullivan's last executed architectural commission.  
It displays a profusion of ornament in Sullivan's  
personal style, expressed in a mottled green terra-  
cotta.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

## A. Physical History:

1. Original and subsequent owners: Legal description of the  
property: Lot 232 in Circuit Court Partition being the  
subdivision of that part of Lot 1 in Partition of the  
west  $\frac{1}{2}$  of the northwest  $\frac{1}{4}$  section 18-40-14.

The following is based on the complete chain of title con-  
tained in Book 547, pp. 193-94, 221, in the Cook County  
Recorder's Office:

Before William P. Krause and his wife Olga, acquired the  
property on May 1, 1920 (Document 113777T73218) it was  
owned by the following:

Mary E. Gannon  
to  
Clarence A. Schnerr  
March 12, 1913 (Document 5143773)

to  
Claude B. Davis  
March 13, 1913 (Document 5144359)

to  
Charles Leon  
October 6, 1913 (Document 5279383)

Leon leased the lot with the two adjacent lots  
to the city of Chicago on July 22, 1914 (Document 5462274).  
May 1, 1920 Leon sold it to the Krauses. According to the  
present occupant, Mr. Coleman, the store was converted into  
a funeral home in 1929. The Krauses continued to own the

building while it was occupied by several funeral directors; Mr. Coleman states that he began his business there in 1944. Olga Krause survived her husband, who died in the mid-1930's, and continued to hold the title to the property until June 25, 1958, when it was sold

to  
Francis M. Wagner (Document 1808475). Wagner is last mentioned in the record as entering into an agreement with  
James M. Coleman  
October 15, 1958 (Document 1823450). Coleman states that he is the present owner.

2. Date of erection: 1922.
3. Architects: William C. Presto in association with Louis H. Sullivan (Presto designed the store proper, Sullivan the facade).
4. Original plan, construction, etc.: The original Building Permit No. A 66517, N 22, p. 541, Department of Buildings, Plan No. 1960, File No. 8891, is dated March 28, 1922, and specifies that a store and apartment are to be built.

Copies of the original working drawings, still in the possession of Mr. Presto, contain the following title in Presto's hand:

Music • Store • And • Apartment  
for  
William P. Krause, Esq.  
To be built at 4611 Lincoln Avenue, Chicago, Ill.  
William C. Presto  
Architect  
179 W. Washington St., Chicago, Ill.  
Louis Sullivan  
Associate

Scale  $\frac{1}{4}$ "=1'-0"

Date February 27, 1922

The first sheet, which includes Sullivan's front elevation, is initialed lower right: LHS 1/25/22. The mark of Sullivan's hand in the ornamental drawing of the terra-cotta facade is unmistakable. Above the "K" emblem design he wrote: "Note: For central and lower figures. . . (?) of polychroma."

Following is a copy of the photostat in the Burnham Library of the original terra-cotta order form:

THE AMERICAN TERRA COTTA AND CERAMIC COMPANY  
MAIN OFFICE 1701 PRAIRIE AVE.  
JANUARY 28th, 1922

Proposal No.: 22026  
Wm. C. Presto, Archt.  
179 W. Washington St.  
Chicago, Ill.

Dear Sir:

We propose, subject to accompanying conditions, to furnish the Architectural Terra Cotta as desired finish for Music Store and Residence to be erected for Wm. P. Krause at 4611 Lincoln Ave., Chicago as per drawings by Wm. C. Presto & L. Sullivan Architects, for the sum of THIRTY SEVEN HUNDRED AND SEVENTY AND no/100. . . . .dollars (\$3770.00). The material to be delivered and set in place with the understanding that scaffold, erection to scaffold, hoisting, mortar, centering, board protection, painting and cleaning, removal of rubbish and pro rata charges are to be taken care of by others.

The above covers terra cotta facing as shown for one front of two story building figured in accordance with drawings dated Jan. 25, 1922.

Approved and (?)  
for acceptance,  
(Signed) Louis H. Sullivan

B. Bibliography:

Szarkowski, John. The Idea of Louis Sullivan. Minneapolis:  
The University of Minnesota Press, 1956. p. 17.

C. Supplementary Material:

Excerpts from correspondence between Bernhard C. Greengard, Willard Connely, and William Presto. This material was made available to Historic American Buildings Survey by Mr. Greengard and will subsequently be deposited in the Burnham Library of the Art Institute of Chicago.

Excerpts from a letter to Willard Connely, author of the biography: Louis Sullivan, as He Lived (Horizon Press, 1960).

January 24, 1964

Dear Mr. Connely:

Your most absorbing and moving biography of Louis Sullivan, which I have just read, has great appeal to one like myself who rather late in life came to appreciate the importance and the greatness of Louis Sullivan in the history of modern architecture.

. . . There is an item in your book, . . . that refers to a small building on Lincoln Avenue in the north section of Chicago, . . . known as the Krause Music Store, the last bit of executed work ever designed by Sullivan. . . I am acquainted with the exact circumstances surrounding its origin. I happen to know the man who was instrumental in getting Sullivan to design the facade of this little structure. He was a draftsman, William Presto by name, who had been employed in George C. Nimmons' office prior to having joined the army during World War I. He returned there in 1919 after his discharge in search of a job. As Presto relates, Sullivan had desk space in Nimmons' office at the time and had just obtained the commission for the last of his "country" banks. . . Sullivan needed a draftsman and hired Presto, after Nimmons introduced him. He and Sullivan then went to an office on Prairie Avenue, where they turned out the working drawings for this bank.

. . . Several years later in 1921 when Presto was in business for himself, he was asked by a neighbor of his, William Krause, proprietor of a music business in Ravenswood, to draw plans for a new store with a flat above. Presto sketched the floor plans and submitted these to his former employer, Louis Sullivan, with the request that he design an elevation. Sullivan obliged by sketching something on the back of an envelope, not unlike the design he later developed to scale. . .

I contacted Presto, who now lives in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, inquiring if he still has the plans of the music store. They were in his possession and he sent me a set of black line prints, made from the original drawings which were in ink on tracing cloth. Sheet #1 was the elevation drawn by Sullivan's own hand, at a scale of one-half inch to the foot, all the details well indicated and carefully drawn. At the bottom of the sheet was the title lettered by Presto, bearing Presto's name in large letters as architect, below it, in quite small letters, appeared the name of Louis Sullivan as associated architect. It was my pleasure to turn this set of prints over to Burnham Library at the Chicago Art Institute, where it rests along with other Sullivan

memorabilia. . .

Very sincerely,

Bernhard C. Greengard

Excerpt from Mr. Connely's reply:

Whitegates, Godalming, England  
February 14, 1964

Dear Mr. Greengard:

It was most good of you to write me your long letter of Jan. 24, received only today, a letter at once, painstaking, informative and gratifying. . . You contribute in your letter, a chapter of importance in the biography of Sullivan. . . I wish I had known about the draftsman William Presto, a character definitely important as Sullivan's last assistant, with the ironical consequence that in the end, with the music shop, Sullivan really turned assistant to Presto. . .

(Signed) Willard Connely

Excerpt from Presto's letter dated June 2nd, 1963:

"When I was released from my military duties in 1919 I went back to Geo. C. Nimmons office for a job, as I had been there before. I spent about 9 years with Mr. Nimmons. He was a great guy. He had good ideas. So did I.

Mr. Sullivan came into the office and used Mr. Nimmons' office for his own purposes. I always had a good stand-in with Mr. Nimmons and when Sullivan came in he suddenly got a couple of bank jobs to do. So Mr. Nimmons said I'll loan you my good man Bill Presto. Mr. Sullivan and I hit it up real well and that time we opened an office on South Prairie Avenue. I went down there and with Mr. Sullivan we started in to make drawings. The bank was Columbus National Bank at Columbus, Wisconsin. We had a wonderful time together doing this job. We would go down to the Cliff Dwellers for luncheon and there I would meet all the greats, like I. K. Pond and A. B. Pond, also a Mr. Woodward and Mr. Millet, the art glass artist, and Paul F. P. Mueller who at one time was structural engineer for Sullivan in the Auditorium office. Mostly we used to go out to lunch at a cafeteria around the corner near 18th. At the time he would come out to our house for dinner. He would sit and enjoy the music from my Victrola. I would do tricks with that machine and he

would listen for hours. I had the greatest confidence from Mr. Sullivan than anyone ever had.

O yes, a good friend of mine said he would like to build a music store something entirely different than all other stores. So I said, Krause I have the right dope for you. So I talked to Mr. Sullivan about it and he came over to my office and I explained the problem. He at that time made a little freehand esquisse on a envelope and said I think this would be a solution to his problem. The sketches were made. I made all the working drawings and all the ornamental work was done by Mr. Sullivan himself."

Note: Somewhat later, after I requested it, Presto sent me a copy of the working drawings for the Krause Music Store. Excerpt from his accompanying letter follows:

"Attached hereto are copies of the original drawings of the Krause Music Store on Lincoln Avenue in Chicago, which was built in 1922. The first page was exclusively Mr. Sullivan's own drawing. Mr. Schneider modeler of the American Terra Cotta Company was the only person in the U.S. who could interpret the designs of Mr. Sullivan in clay. He really was a great artist. Mr. Sullivan and I visited the Amer. T. C. Co. at Crystal Lake many times to watch the progress on our little job. We were entertained a few times at Crystal Lake by a wonderful man, Mr. William D. Gates, Pres. of the company."

Note: Presto included a photostat of the contract for the terra cotta work. I presented this material to the Burnham Library.

B. C. Greengard

July 7, 1965

Carl W. Condit in his "The Chicago School of Architecture" includes a fine photograph of the Krause Music Store by Richard Nickel. In the text Condit says that Louis Sullivan had probably very little to do with the design. I informed him about the facts as given in Presto's letter.

B. C. G.

## PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

### A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The terra cotta facade of this

small store was Louis Sullivan's last architectural commission. The store front is a distinguished composition in its own right. The entire ornamental surface is a soft green color, with delicate low relief patterning, framing the display window and a fully sculptural emblem rising on the vertical axis.

2. Condition of fabric: Excellent.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: 25' (southwest front - 28' high) x 68'; rectangular, two stories plus basement.
2. Foundations: Concrete; 2' x 2' x 1' concrete footings under 4" lally columns.
3. Wall construction: The facade is executed entirely in a light-green terra cotta with a mottled finish. The remaining walls are of common brick.
4. Structural system, framing: The ground floor is supported by steel I-beams on 6 round steel columns running longitudinally through the center of the building, with 1' wood joists placed laterally from beam to wall. The upper apartment floor is supported on lateral steel beams running between the two brick walls, which are spanned by wood joists.
5. Porches, stoops, bulkheads, etc.: The front entrances and show window are set far back from the sidewalk, creating a pleasant and comfortable shelter for the pedestrian. The sidewalk slopes up to the show window and is tiled in stock white, black, and green tesserae with the name "Krause."
6. Chimneys: Two on south wall: front to apartment fireplace; rear to basement furnace.
7. Openings:
  - a. Doorways and doors: The door to the west, on the left leads to upper apartment; the door on the right opens to main floor. Originally, these were wooden, with glass panels; they have been replaced by plate glass doors with gold anodized aluminum frames. From each vestibule, an original wood and glass door provides access to the interior. At the rear, doors provide access to the apartment, store, and basement respectively.
  - b. Windows: The front originally had a large show window, which has been replaced by four smaller windows set in



a gold-anodized aluminum frame with medium green rectangular panels above and below. Four casement windows with leaded glass light the living room above. These are still intact, though not visible from the exterior due to the addition of a double-hung aluminum storm windows with venetian blinds behind them and in front of the leaded glass.

8. Roof: shape and covering: Tar and gravel roof sloping to rear with longitudinal parapet walls with tile coping.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans: Basement: storage space in front; laundry room and boiler to rear (the rear portion is presently the mortician's work room; the front has been remodeled into a smoking lounge). Ground floor store: entry to right of display window -- French doors to south and east (latter pair have been removed, linking the display area to the storage proper); store area 22'-6" x 44'-4"; arched entrance (now blocked and replaced by two doors near each wall) to rear office 17'-8" x 6'-0" and lavatory. Apartment: 23'-4" x 12'-0" living room across front, reached by a reception hall from stair hall; two bedrooms off hall to south with windows opening to a small light court; opposite is storage, a bathroom, and a pantry around another smaller light court; at the rear is the kitchen and dining room, the former opening to an open porch (now enclosed) and the latter to a sleeping porch.
2. Stairways: In the northwest corner is a stair leading from the vestibule up to the apartment; from main room down to basement. At the rear of the building is a wooden stair, from the apartment to the downstairs, and a stair and well descending to the basement.
3. Flooring: Wooden strip flooring in maple.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: Buff painted walls and ceiling.
5. Doorways and doors: Stock, dark wooden finish.
6. Decorative features and trim: There is a 12" ceiling molding around the main room based on classical models -- beaded, denticulated, egg and dart, acanthus leaf; it is finished in gold leaf with a single painted green band through the middle. There is a similar 6" molding in the store vestibule.
7. Lighting, type of fixtures: The original fixtures have been

removed, and only the ceiling caps remain in the store;  
the present lighting is dim side lights and floor lamps.

8. Heating: Central steam heating.

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: The building faces approximately southwest on Lincoln Avenue in the Ravenswood section of Chicago's North Side.
2. Outbuildings: There is a small frame garage at the rear of the lot with a small square plot of grass between it and the store. The store now has a 3-story party-wall neighbor on either side of it. These two buildings tend to squeeze the smaller two-story structure between them. The surrounding neighborhood is made up of rather bleak commercial buildings constructed in the 1920's and '30's. Adjacent to the Lincoln Avenue commercial area are well kept houses and apartments.

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